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AUTHOR Boyer, Susan P.; Sedlacek, William E.  
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## ABSTRACT

Expectations about counseling has been shown to be an important determinant of the effectiveness of counseling. The relationship between counseling expectations and interest in seeking counseling was explored in 450 incoming college students as part of their freshman orientation program. Subjects completed one of three versions of the Expectations about Counseling Scale, measuring their expectations about either educational/vocational counseling, emotional/social counseling, or counseling with no content area specified. Data analysis revealed a significant main effect for subject gender. Compared to males, females scored higher in responsibility, openness, and motivation; obtained higher scores in their expectations for acceptance, attractiveness, genuineness, trustworthiness, and nurturance; and expected more immediacy and concreteness in the counseling process and a higher quality outcome. Compared to females, males expected more directiveness, empathy, expertise, and self-disclosure on behalf of counselors. No other significant main effects or interaction effects were found; no significant differences were found in students' expectations for different types of counseling. (Author/NB)

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# COUNSELING CENTER

Office of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

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Presenting Problem

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SUMMARY

Three versions of the Expectations about Counseling Scale were administered to 450 incoming students, as part of their freshman orientation program. Students' expectations about educational/vocational counseling, emotional/social counseling and counseling (no content area specified), were compared. Results revealed a significant main effect for subject gender, while no significant differences were found in students' expectations for the different types of counseling. Explanations to account for the results obtained are provided.

Expectations about counseling has been shown to be an important determinant of the effectiveness of counseling (Frank, 1959), where a person turns for help (Snyder, Hill & Derksen, 1972) and whether a person terminates counseling after the initial interview (Heilbrun, 1970, 1972). Garfield (1978) notes that those who drop out rarely seek additional counseling. Thus, the issue of expectations assumes critical importance..

A number of studies have examined students' perceptions of various help providers (Christensen & Magoon, 1974; Gelso, Brooks & Karl, 1975; Gelso & McKenzie, 1973; Snyder, Hill, & Derksen, 1972; Tinsley, de St. Aubin, & Brown, 1982). The results of these investigations indicated that students have different expectancies about the helping process depending upon the label or professional title of the help provider offering the service. These differences in expectations seem to be related to tendency to seek help from various help providers.

Students' expectations for career counselors have been found to be lower than those for other help providers. Tinsley, Brown, de St. Aubin and Lucek (1984), in a study examining students' expectancies for help from seven campus help providers (advisor, career counselor, clinical psychologist, college counselor, counseling psychologist, peer counselor, and psychiatrist), found that "by and large, students expected less confrontation, directiveness, concreteness, immediacy and a less beneficial outcome from a

career counselor than from other helpers" (p. 157). Tinsley and Benton (1978) found that students prefer to experience these variables in counseling, suggesting that the career counselor will not be a preferred help provider for many students. This is interesting for several reasons. First, the number of vocationally-oriented students has increased considerably from 1969 to 1982 (Mason-Sowell & Sedlacek, 1984). Second, college students consider their careers to be of central importance (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1984). Third, educational/vocational concerns are the most common problems of college students (Carney, Savitz, Weiskott, 1979; Snyder et al., 1972). Finally, college students have been found to be more interested in pursuing career counseling than other types of counseling (Boyer & Sedlacek, 1984).

In addition to studying expectancies for help as a function of type of help provider, researchers have also examined counseling expectations as a function of type of presenting problem. Hardin and Yanico (1983) studied students' expectations about counseling for vocational concerns and for personal concerns. They found that students reported similar expectations when anticipating discussing personal or vocational concerns. It is noteworthy that in the Hardin and Yanico study, the variable, help provider, was controlled for, by using the label "counseling psychologist". Gelso and Karl (1974) suggested that use of the term counseling psychologist may serve to focus students' attention on professional role, as opposed to the presenting

concern that students were asked to consider.

In the present study, students' expectations about educational/vocational (E/V) counseling, emotional/social (E/S) counseling, and counseling (no content area specified), were compared, when provided by a "counselor". The term counselor was used, as opposed to counseling psychologist, to decrease the likelihood that students' attention would be focused on professional role. Students' expectations about E/V counseling are felt to be particularly important for several reasons. Many continue to see vocational counseling/psychology as the area that distinguishes counseling psychology from the other psychological specialties and as the area in which counseling psychology has made its most distinctive contributions (Fretz, 1985; Holland, Magoon, & Spokane, 1981). Another reason for studying students' expectancies regarding E/V counseling is because there is a tendency for vocational psychology to be denigrated by counseling practitioners (Gelso, Prince, Cornfield, Payne, Royalty, & Wiley, 1985).

Students expressed interest in seeking counseling for E/V concerns, E/S concerns and counseling to help them study more efficiently, was examined. Of interest was the relationship between counseling expectations and interest in seeking counseling.

### Method

#### Participants

Four hundred fifty students (238 female; 212 male)

entering a large eastern university completed a questionnaire, as part of their orientation program. The racial composition of the sample was Black (11%), White (80%), Asian (4%), Hispanic (2%), American Indian or Alaska native (0.2%) and other (3%). Students ranged in age from 16 to 19, with a mean age of 17.6 and a standard deviation of .52. Twenty percent indicated that they had been to see a professional counselor in the past.

### Instrument

To measure students' perceptions of counseling, a modified version of the short form of the Expectations About Counseling Scale (EAC) (Tinsley, Workman and Kass, 1980) was used. Psychometric analyses of the two forms of the EAC indicated that the short form has a stronger relationship with external validity criteria, in addition to the advantage of being more succinct (Washington & Tinsley, 1982). The EAC is composed of factors designed to measure respondents' expectancies regarding client attitudes and behaviors, client characteristics, counselor attitudes and behaviors, counselor characteristics, characteristics of the process, and qualities of outcome. Each of the items on the brief form are Likert-format, with response options ranging from not true (1) to definitely true (7). The instructions on the modified EAC requested that respondents "pretend that they are about to see a counselor for the first interview."

Reliability of the scales on the brief EAC ranged from .69 to .82, with a median reliability of .76. The scales are



judged to have sufficiently high internal consistency reliability since the correlation between corresponding scales on the full and brief forms of the EAC typically exceeds .85.

Students also responded to seven point Likert-format items concerning their interest in seeking counseling regarding: educational/vocational concerns, emotional/social concerns and counseling to help them study more efficiently.

#### Procedure

Students participated in a data collection program, as part of their freshman orientation program. Female doctoral psychology students supervised the data collection. Students were randomly assigned a self-administering questionnaire containing one of three forms of the modified EAC questionnaire. Forms specified counseling, no particular focus (N=151), educational/vocational counseling (N=151), and emotional/ social counseling (N=149).

#### Analysis

The design of the study was a 3 X 2 (Type of Counseling X Subject Gender) factorial design. Data from the 18 scales were analyzed by multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). In cases of significant multivariate effects, further univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were performed.

Multiple regression analyses were performed, with the 18 scales on the EAC as the independent variables and interest in seeking counseling regarding educational/vocational concerns, interest in seeking counseling regarding

emotional/social concerns, and interest in counseling to improve studying efficiency, as the dependent variables.

### Results

Results of the two-way MANOVA revealed a significant main effect for subject gender,  $F(18, 405) = 6.61, p < .05$ . No other significant main effects or interaction effects were found.

Table 1 shows the results of the univariate analyses of variance, in addition to means and standard deviation for female and male EAC scores. Significant differences between female and male students' EAC scores were found on 15 of the 18 scales. In terms of client attitudes and behaviors, women scored higher in responsibility, openness and motivation. They also obtained higher scores than men in their expectations for acceptance, attractiveness, genuineness, trustworthiness and nurturance. They expected more immediacy and concreteness in the counseling process and expected a higher quality outcome. In contrast, men expected more directiveness, empathy, expertise and self-disclosure on behalf of counselors, than did women.

Multiple regression analyses, with the EAC scales as the independent variables and interest in seeking counseling regarding E/V concerns, E/S concerns, and counseling to help students study more efficiently, as the dependent variables, were performed. Motivation, immediacy, openness and attractiveness predicted interest in seeking E/V counseling, motivation, directiveness and realism predicted interest in

seeking E/S counseling, and immediacy, expertise and motivation predicted interest in seeking counseling to help students study more efficiently. The multiple regression coefficients for these dependent variables are presented in Table 2.

### Discussion

The results indicate that female and male subjects have different expectations for counseling. This is consistent with the results obtained in other research (Hardin & Yanico, 1983; Subich, 1983; Tinsley et al., 1980). Hardin & Yanico (1983) suggested the following explanations to account for similar results obtained in their own study. Females have higher overall expectations regarding counseling than do males. These gender differences are consistent with sex role stereotypes on male and female interpersonal styles. Female subjects' greater expectancy for the facilitative conditions in counseling may be reflective of their interpersonal orientation. In contrast, males' greater expectancy of directiveness, expertise and self-disclosure on the part of counselors may be indicative of their task orientation. Female subjects expect more positive outcome and accept greater personal responsibility and involvement in the therapeutic process. Subich (1983) has speculated that male's lesser comfort and propensity to become involved in such processes may result in their expectancy to become less engaged and to expect a less positive outcome.

No significant differences were found in incoming

college students' expectation of counseling for educational/vocational, emotional/social and counseling, no content specified. One explanation is that most incoming students have not had previous experience with counselors, and therefore have not given much thought to the different types of services offered by these help providers. Another explanation is that the distinction between these professional activities is of greater significance to the individuals providing these services than it is to potential recipients who utilize them.

Expectations about counseling were found to be related to expressed interest in seeking various types of counseling. Motivation was related to interest in seeking all three types of counseling (E/V, E/S, studying efficiency). Immediacy was correlated with two types (E/V and studying efficiency). Openness and attractiveness were related to E/V counseling, directiveness and realism were related to E/S counseling, while expertise was correlated with interest in counseling to help student study more efficiently.

There are a number of limitations in the present study. Use of the terms emotional/social and educational/vocational, while used by many counseling professionals, may have confused incoming students, who lacked familiarity and experience with counseling services in general and with counseling jargon, in particular.

Previous research has shown that college freshmen and sophomores see the counselor's function as primarily

informational, while juniors and seniors perceive the counselor as more of a social-emotional problem solver (King & Matteson, 1959). Since, the present study focused on incoming freshman, future research is needed to examine differences between incoming and upper class students, in terms of their expectations about different types of counseling.

Hardin and Subich (1985) found no differences between clients and nonclients in terms of their counseling expectations. These researchers stated, however, that it was premature to conclude that no differences exist between these groups since their F value approached significance and since their sample sizes may have been too small to detect differences that might have been present. The next logical step in the present line of research is to study the expectations of actual clients toward emotional/social and educational/vocational counseling, and, to determine if and how these expectancies relate to process and outcome variables.

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Table 1

## Results of Univariate Analysis of Variance for Subject Gender

Scale	Women		Men		F(1,422)
	M	SD	M	SD	
Responsibility	6.28	.86	6.53	.92	9.57
Openness	5.34	1.42	5.72	1.30	6.94
Motivation	5.94	1.49	4.27	1.32	5.04
Attractiveness	5.25	1.50	5.55	1.46	4.68
Immediacy	6.85	1.19	5.33	1.15	17.50
Concreteness	6.78	1.09	5.10	1.15	7.68
Outcome	6.22	1.05	6.69	1.14	18.56
Acceptance	6.27	1.12	6.60	1.22	7.19
Confrontation	6.56	1.12	6.71	1.12	1.71
Genuineness	7.56	.78	7.87	.89	14.43
Trustworthiness	7.84	.94	6.14	1.12	7.28
Tolerance	6.77	1.21	6.78	1.24	.00
Directiveness	5.87	1.26	5.35	1.14	22.05
Empathy	5.94	1.56	5.43	1.29	15.34
Expertise	6.83	1.30	6.61	1.26	3.93
Self-Disclosure	5.33	1.59	6.88	1.39	12.58
Nurturance	6.07	.99	6.38	1.00	8.88
Realism	5.98	1.17	5.99	1.03	.03

1=Not true, 2=Slightly true, 3= Somewhat true, 4=Fairly true, 5=Quite true, 6= Very true, 7= Definitely true

1

All means significantly different at the .05 level except those for Confrontation, Tolerance, and Realism.

Table 2

Multiple Regression on Interest in Seeking Counseling

Criterion	Independent Variables
1. Interest in seeking educational/ vocational counseling	Motivation Immediacy Openness Attractiveness
Multiple R = .36	
2. Interest in seeking emotional/ social counseling	Motivation Directiveness Realism
Multiple R = .35	
3. Interest in seeking counseling to help me study more efficiently.	Immediacy Expertise Motivation
Multiple R = .35	

Press.

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Table 1  
Questionnaire Scales

Variable	Measure	Subscales
sex-role orientation	Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem, 1974)	Masculinity Femininity
leadership style	Ohio State Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) adapted (Stogdill & Coons, 1957)	Structure Consideration
conflict resolution style	Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument -adapted (T-K) (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974)	Avoidance Accommodation Compromise Competition Collaboration
influence style	Profile of Organizational Influence Strategies (POIS) adapted from (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1986)	Assertiveness Rationality Coalition Ingratiation Exchange
job satisfaction	Job Description Index (JDI) Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969)	Work Co-workers Supervisor Pay Promotion
job stress	Chemers, Hays, Rhodewalt & Wysocki, 1985	Task Subordinate Co-Worker Supervisor
performance	leadership effectiveness managerial excellence subordinate performance promotions organizational rewards	

Table 2  
Description of Sample

Variable	Total <i>n</i> = 247	Males <i>n</i> = 121	Females <i>n</i> = 126	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
yrs. experience	13.8	13.6	12.5	n.s.		
yrs. w. company	19.7	20.6	17.6	2.65	234	.01
yrs. in position	3.6	3.6	2.14	3.11	240	.01
# male subordinates	3.8	4.6	1.5	3.12	238	.01
# female subs.	4.9	2.6	5.5	-2.25	237	.05
masculinity	5.4	5.4	5.3	n.s.		
femininity	4.6	4.5	4.7	3.06	242	.01



Table 3  
Relationships Among Variables

	Masculinity	Femininity
Structure	.35 ***	.03
Consideration	.37 ***	.24 ***
Competition	.33 ***	.09
Compromise	-.16 **	.13 *
Collaboration	.34 ***	-.03
Avoidance	-.27 ***	.10
Accommodation	-.18 **	.37 ***
Assertiveness	.11 *	-.15 *
Rationality	.21 ***	.16 **
Coalition	.001	.01
Ingratiation	-.01	.14 *
Exchange	.09	-.10

\*  $p < .05$   
 \*\*  $p < .01$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 4  
Regressions

Criterion: Masculinity

Predictor	coef.	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change
Structure	.27	.35	.12	.12
Competition	.27	.44	.2	.076
Rationality	.09	.45	.203	.007
Assertiveness	.02	.45	.204	.0002

Criterion: Femininity

Accommodation	.31	.36	.132	.132
Consideration	.2	.41	.17	.039
Exchange	-.19	.42	.18	.0095
Ingratiation	.2	.45	.2	.02
Coalition	-.07	.46	.208	.004

Criterion: Androgyny

Consideration	.3	.44	.2	.2
Competition	.19	.49	.25	.05
Structure	.19	.51	.27	.02
Accommodation	.13	.53	.29	.02
Rationality	.09	.54	.29	.006
Assertiveness	-.05	.54	.29	.002
Ingratiation	.07	.54	.29	.003
Coalition	-.04	.54	.3	.001
Exchange	-.02	.54	.3	.0001
Collaboration	.01	.54	.3	.0001

Table 5  
ANOVAs - Managerial Style

Variable	Source	$F$	$df$	$p$	
Structure	masculinity	17.07	1,215	.001	Hi>Lo
Consideration	masculinity	31.44	1,207	.001	Hi>Lo
	femininity	14.21	1,207	.001	Hi>Lo
	masc. X fem	8.23	1,207	.005	A>M,F,U
Competition	masculinity	15.87	1,221	.001	Hi>Lo
Collaboration	masculinity	20.48	1,218	.001	Hi>Lo
Avoidance	masculinity	13.67	1,221	.001	Lo>Hi
Accommodation	masculinity	7.98	1,220	.005	Lo>Hi
	femininity	14.21	1,220	.001	Hi>Lo
	masc. X fem.	11.75	1,220	.001	A,F,U>M
Upward Appeal	sex X masc.	5.49	1,221	.02	LoM <LoM LoM <HiM
Rationality	masculinity	9.73	1,227	.002	Hi>Lo
	sex X fem.	8.16	1,227	.005	LoF <LoF LoF <HiF
Exchange	sex X masc X fem	9.32	1,221	.003	

Table 6  
Managerial Effectiveness

Variable	Source	<u>F</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>	
Work Sat.	masculinity	4.6	1,220	.05	Lo>Hi
Co-Worker Sat.	masculinity	5.24	1,219	.05	Lo>Hi
Task Stress	sex X masc.	7.2	1,217	.01	HiM <LoM & HiM
	masc. X fem.	5.6	1,217	.05	F>A
Leader Effect.	masculinity	31.22	1,221	.001	Hi>Lo
	femininity	4.33	1,221	.05	Hi>Lo
Manag. Excell.	masculinity	8.7	1,221	.01	Hi>Lo
Sub. Perform.	masculinity	4.04	1,220	.05	Hi>Lo
Promotions	masculinity	3.8	1,221	.05	Lo>Hi
Org. Rewards	masculinity	3.5	1,212	.06	Lo>Hi